

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT:

Bob Sadler

(313) 833-7937 or (313) 819-5761 (cell)

bobsadler@detroithistorical.org

PROVOCATIVE NEW EXHIBIT AT THE DETROIT HISTORICAL MUSEUM EXPLORES 300 YEARS OF HEROES AND VILLAINS

Hero or Villain? Metro Detroit's Legacy of Leadership, opening September 13 in the Detroit Historical Museum's Booth-Wilkinson Gallery, focuses a critical eye on 16 key figures in the region's 300+ year history and gives visitors the final judgment as to whether they should be revered or reviled. The individuals featured in the exhibit include the following:

- **Antoine Cadillac** (1658-1730) – Frenchman who founded the village of Detroit in 1701.
- **Lewis Cass** (1782-1866) – politician who served as a Michigan Territorial Governor, U.S. Senator, Secretary of State and Ambassador to France.
- **Ty Cobb** (1886-1961) – Detroit Tiger player and manager who was part of the inaugural group of inductees into the Baseball Hall of Fame.
- **Fr. Charles Coughlin** (1891-1979) – Catholic priest who established the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak.
- **Henry Ford** (1863-1947) – founder of the Ford Motor Company.
- **Ernie Goodman** (1906-1997) – nationally known Detroit lawyer.
- **Martha Griffiths** (1912-2003) – 20-year Congresswoman and Michigan's first female Lieutenant Governor.
- **Jimmy Hoffa** (1913-1975) – president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters union.
- **Orville Hubbard** (1903-1982) – longtime mayor of Dearborn.
- **Ann "Nancy" Martin** (1799-1875) – Central Market merchant and donor of land that became the Harper Hospital campus.
- **Irene McCabe** (1935-2004) – community activist and founder of the National Action Group.
- **Chief Pontiac** (1720-1769) – Odawa chief who opposed British control of the Great Lakes.

- **Walter Reuther** (1907-1970) – one of the founders and subsequently president of the United Auto Workers union.
- **Ossian Sweet** (1895-1960) – African American physician acquitted of murder in the 1920s following a shooting at his home the day after moving into a white neighborhood.
- **Augustus Woodward** (1774-1827) – Michigan Territorial Judge who created a plan for Detroit after the Great Fire of 1805.
- **Coleman A. Young** (1918-1997) – Detroit’s first African American mayor.

These personalities represent all periods of Detroit’s history and include a cross-section from politics, sports, commerce and religion. Each historical figure is presented through individual displays, offering visitors a multi-faceted view of their life, times, character, and the issues that defined their legacies. Popular perceptions of each are reflected through the eyes of their contemporaries, with a balanced selection of opinions offered by both devotees and detractors. The human personality behind the public persona will be established using portraits, paintings, period clothing, and personal artifacts.

The Detroit Historical Society gathered a panel of esteemed writers – scholars, historians, journalists, and editors – to help provide a unique perspective for our visitors, addressing both the positive and negative perceptions of each leader’s legacy.

The *Hero or Villain?* exhibit is made possible by a generous contribution from the **General Motors Foundation** and **Bank of America**. **Wayne State University Alumni Association** is a community partner in the exhibit.

The Detroit Historical Museum, located at 5401 Woodward Ave. (NW corner of Kirby) in Detroit’s Cultural Center area, is open to the public Wednesday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from Noon to 5 p.m. On Mondays and Tuesdays, the Museum is not open to the public but available for group tours by calling **(313) 833-7979**. Adult admission is \$6. Seniors (60+), college students with valid college ID, and youth ages 5-18 pay \$4. Admission for children ages four and under is free. Parking in the Museum’s lot is \$4 at all times. Permanent exhibits include the famous *Streets of Old Detroit*, *Frontiers to Factories*, *The Motor City*, and *The Glancy Trains*. For more information, call the Museum at **(313) 833-1805** or check out our website at www.detroithistorical.org.

###



Chief Pontiac, chief of the Odawa (image courtesy of the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library)



Ty Cobb, Baseball Hall of Famer and all-time Tiger great (photo courtesy of the Ilitch Holdings Corporate Archives)



Martha Griffiths, Michigan's first female Lieutenant Governor and 20-year Congresswoman (photo courtesy of the Michigan Women's Historical Center & Hall of Fame)



Coleman Young, Detroit's first African American mayor (photo courtesy of the Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University)